

The celebrated saying of Tertullian, speaking of the early Christian martyrs, "the blood of the martyrs is become the seed of Christians," has been fulfilled in the missions of Annam (Tonquin and Cochin-China). The Church of Christ has always set great store by the conversion of the mighty empire of the Chinese with its seething millions of immortal souls, and has spared for its conversion neither money, nor toil, nor the best blood of her children, and on the whole she has considered herself amply rewarded; yet, though Indo-China has but the tenth part of the population of China, the number of Christians is much larger, showing the richness of the soil and the abundance of the harvest.

For three centuries now, the blood-stained pages of its martyrology have not been closed. The fierce Ming-Mang one day sent word to his mandarins: "Treat them without pity, torture them, put to death all who refuse to trample on the cross. Let them understand that they are declared rebels by the mere refusal. Then with an axe, or cutlass, or with whatever comes first to hand, let the obstinate ones be cut down till not one is left."

But it was all in vain. The rage of the persecutors was conquered by the courage of the martyrs. When Ming-Mang died in 1841, the Catholic faith which he had pledged himself to stamp out was stronger than ever; nor have the tyrant's successors been more fortunate.

Later on, the conquest of Cochin-China and the famous Tonquin expedition, undertaken by the French Republic, offered the persecuting mandarins the occasion of putting to death by torture and starvation first forty thousand Christians and then fifty thousand. But, as if nothing had happened, there are to-day in Indo-China over six hundred and twenty thousand Catholics. Not only so, but lately the Vicar Apostolic, recommending the West Tonquin mission which he has consecrated to the Sacred